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# LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Serving lawn maintenance and chemical lawn care professionals

*In lawn care*

## Women seek challenges

Although entrance to the lawn care industry can be gained via various routes, few men can say they married or were dragged into the trade. Most will say, in fact, that they started small, with little to recommend the business except the desire to become one's own boss.

However, the industry has attracted in the last decade a handful of women, who most typically work as part of a husband-wife team.

Sue Dougherty, treasurer of Dougherty Gardens, Franklinville, N.J., told LAWN CARE INDUSTRY that the variety of the industry makes it a natural for women who like a challenge.

"The whole industry is so diversified," she said, "I can't see how a wife couldn't become involved."

Dougherty Gardens, which is a combination garden and greenhouse, was started by her father-in-law and acquired by the Doughertys about six years ago. Dougherty said she handles the billing and retail side of the business while her husband, who studied horticulture, manages all production aspects. The partnership, she said, works in spite of any enforced male-female division of labor.

"It's really a division based on what one enjoys doing more," she said. "And the roles are not



Sue Dougherty

exclusive."

Dougherty said the company, which employs two full-time people during the off-season and up to 10 more during the peak season, puts out a monthly newsletter which she writes and edits. The newsletter is a scheme to introduce customers to the business.

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*Clippings*

## Lawn care gets lots of publicity

The lawn care industry received a great deal of national attention this spring when several leading publications did feature stories on the industry's phenomenal growth.

Advertising Age magazine carried a story headlined "Lawncare market fertile" in its April 18th issue. Several well-known lawn care figures were quoted, including LAWN CARE INDUSTRY publisher Bob Earley and Lawn Doctor president Tony Giordano of Matawan, N.J.

Peter Kerr, a staff writer for the New York Times newspaper, also quoted Giordano and LAWN CARE INDUSTRY editor Jerry Roche in a story he wrote entitled "Professional Care of Lawns Increases," which appeared April 14th. The Times also ran a story with the title of "Man and the Lawn — a Long Love Story" in its April 12th editions.

Kerr's story moved on the New York Times national wire and appeared in many other news-

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*At PLCAA*

## Van Fossen keynoter

Jack Van Fossen, president of the nation's largest chemical lawn care company, will be the keynote speaker at the annual Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA) convention and trade show in Indianapolis, Ind. this November.

Van Fossen will speak on the past, present and future of the lawn care industry, relating his experiences as head of the trend-setting ChemLawn Corp.

The annual convention and trade show will be held Nov. 8-10. Van Fossen's keynote speech is tentatively scheduled for the afternoon of Tuesday, Nov. 8 in the Indi-

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Jack Van Fossen

*Business outlook*

## Pick-up in economy boosts lawn care biz

Buoyed by a pickup in the economy this spring and summer, lawn care businessmen from coast to coast are generally optimistic about an increase in gross revenues by the end of the year. Indeed, some were seeing good growth early in the busy season.

"We just had the best first quarter in our history," points out Tony Giordano of Lawn Doctor, Matawan, NJ. And that's nothing to scoff at: last year, Lawn Doctor's 270 franchisees grossed \$27 million on 160,000 accounts.

"This looks like it's going to be

a fantastic year," Giordano continues. "We projected a substantial (30 percent) growth, but we're 20 percent ahead of predictions."

Keith Weidler of Shur-Lawn in Omaha, Neb. also likes what has been happening.

"The general economic news is better than I've seen it in two years," Weidler notes. "It should inspire consumer confidence, which should in turn inspire better business."

Weidler adds that Shur-Lawn

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**JOAN HOLMES,**  
Production Manager

**MARILYN MacDONALD,**  
Production Supervisor

**MARIO ROSSETTI,**  
Graphic Design

**JOAN SMITH,**  
Circulation Supervisor

**GAIL KESSLER,**  
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## MARKETING/SALES

Midwest Office:

**JOE KOSEMPA,**  
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**ROBERT EARLEY**  
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## UPFRONT

Staff addition at  
LCI

Newcomer Joe Kosempa, left, makes a sales call while your editor watches on.

With this issue, LAWN CARE INDUSTRY welcomes Joe Kosempa to its staff as a regional sales manager. Joe is taking the place of Jim Brooks, who — as most of you who read this magazine regularly know by now — is the new executive director of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

Joe will be operating from our Cleveland office with group publisher Bob Earley. He will handle advertising sales for the Midwest, including the states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, Minnesota and part of Kentucky. He joins Ron Kempner (Atlanta) and Bob Mierow (Seattle) as regional sales managers.

Despite being so new to the lawn care industry, Joe has already recognized some trends.

"I see a very modern business growing," he says. "As the consumer demands more leisure opportunities, the lawn care industry's tremendous growth potential will surface even more."

Joe is a native Clevelander who attended Ohio State University. He has spent his last 20 years with the now-defunct Cleveland afternoon newspaper, the Press, where he was a national account sales manager. Prior to that, Joe was salesman for a family tool and die business.

He sees his job as being of an informational nature, though in a different respect than that of an

editorially-oriented employee.

"Even though I'm in advertising sales, I think my job is still an educational one," Joe says. "The products that are advertised are themselves informational articles."

Joe is already looking forward to meeting many of you at the upcoming PLCAA convention and trade show Nov. 8-10 in the Indianapolis Convention Center. Until then, he will be travelling throughout the Midwest and getting to know the industry's key people.

We at LCI are happy to have Joe Kosempa on our staff. We think he is a valuable addition, and hope you will also welcome him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our apologies for leaving Lawn Doctor off the May list of "Million Dollar Lawn Care Companies." The business, of which Tony Giordano is president, is one of the five largest chemical lawn care companies in the entire country with franchises throughout the Eastern seaboard area.

*Jerry Roche*

## MY SIDE

Here in Riverside, California — in marked contrast to the fun-in-the-sun set 60 miles to our west — a lone green-shirted applicator can be seen sweating profusely as he makes his appointed rounds. As gleaming beaches and gorgeous weather await the almost year-round exodus from the cities to the surf, chemical lawn care comes to Southern California.

While the air and weather at the beaches is superb, Riverside is famous for some of this planet's worst smog and blistering heat. All of Los Angeles' smog is blown inland to Riverside, and our majestic mountains trap it. The result is an overwhelming, thick, dirty, eye-stinging, lung-smearing smog. Visibility on an average summer day is half a mile. And after absorbing this smog all day, one's lungs ache and the voice becomes raspy.

Because our area is a semi-desert, it is very, very hot during the summer: the temperature reaches 113 degrees some days, and it is not unusual to have seven consecutive days of 100-degree-plus temperatures. Not exactly perfect working conditions possible, to say nothing of the stress on lawns.

But these are just a few of the "challenges" chemical lawn care



faces here. Others, which confront us daily, are:

**Soil.** Our soil is very hard clay. The Pentagon is considering lining missile silos with our clay to protect them from nuclear attack; core aerification is done with a pickax.

**Water.** Folks here love water — as long as it's in their swimming pools. Because of our clay soil, water runs off after a few minutes, and the minute a customer sees a little water running off onto the sidewalk, he cuts off the sprinklers. Naturally, we have a tremendous stress problem ... but our sidewalks are clean.

**Obstacles.** We have to pull hoses around shrubs, gates, pools, ski boats, RVs, trash cans and

sprinkler heads. Every home has fences, and our hoses love to get caught on them.

**Dogs.** These creatures are left outside in the fenced yard while the owners are at work. Spot is therefore left to "do his thing," and he cooperates. And, of course, Southern Californians are too "laid back" to stoop-to-scoop-poop. As a result, we have a smelly hose and funky boots.

**Gardeners.** Everybody and his brother who owns a pickup truck has a lawn mower in the back and calls himself a "gardener." But the vast majority know nothing about lawn care: they leave the mower on the "low" setting to save time, and they have an aversion to fertilizer and weed control.

In conclusion, when you applicators from back East are playing your Beach Boys albums during a blizzard, and are longing to come here, just remember some of the problems I've mentioned. If you are still foolish and insist on satisfying your masochistic urges, then be sure and bring with you the one absolute essential item that will ensure survival ...

a gas mask.

Larry Bourbonnais  
Spray Green  
Riverside, Calif.



## Morgan tapped by ALCA

Gail Morgan was named executive director of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America when the group's Executive Committee met April 15.

Morgan's appointment went into effect May 1. She had been acting executive director since Jan. 20 when former director Alan Smith's resignation took effect.

"One of ALCA's main goals, of course, is to develop its membership," Morgan says. "One of my personal goals is to generate better communication within the greens industry. I also want to get involved in the industry and meet

a lot of people."

Before joining ALCA as program director last June, Morgan was manager of a 3,500-member recreational facility in Arlington, Va.

"Being acting director was kind of a limbo position," recalls Morgan. "But during that time, I learned more about the organization itself. I found out that there are a lot of things going on in

ALCA, and since then I've been trying to coordinate the staff and establish priorities."

Morgan is a native of Wilmington, Del. She attended Elon College in Elon College, N.C. She and her husband now reside in Vienna, Va.

ALCA's Executive Committee made the appointment through President David R. Pinkus of North Haven Gardens, Dallas,

Gail Morgan



Texas, after hearing a recommendation from its Search Committee.

ALCA has 885 members throughout the United States.

### Shamrock plans joint venture

The Diamond Shamrock Corp. has reached a preliminary agreement with Showa Denko, K.K. of Japan to form an agricultural chemicals and animal health business.

Diamond Shamrock chairman William H. Bricker said that the venture aims at carrying on his firm's existing business in the industry and the expansion of business west into the Pacific and Asia.

### Lakeshore plans new facility

Plans have been made to construct a new curtain granulation urea and sulfur coating facility in the northeast by Lakeshore Equipment & Supply Co. of Elyria, Ohio.

At presstime, site of the project had not yet been determined. According to Lakeshore sources, construction is expected to take about 12 months, and the facility is hoped to be fully operational by fall, 1984.

### No danger from 2,4-D exposure

According to a recent study by the United States Department of Agriculture, less than one gram of 2,4-D is absorbed and excreted by an average 175-pound worker who applies the herbicide 30 days a year for 30 years. That is several hundred times less than the acceptable daily intake total for the same person and time period, as established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

The study was undertaken by R.C. Nash, P.C. Kearney, S.N. Fertig, J.C. Maitlen and C.R. Sell, all of the USDA, in spring of 1980. The study was taken on ground applicators from North Dakota and aerial applicators from Washington.

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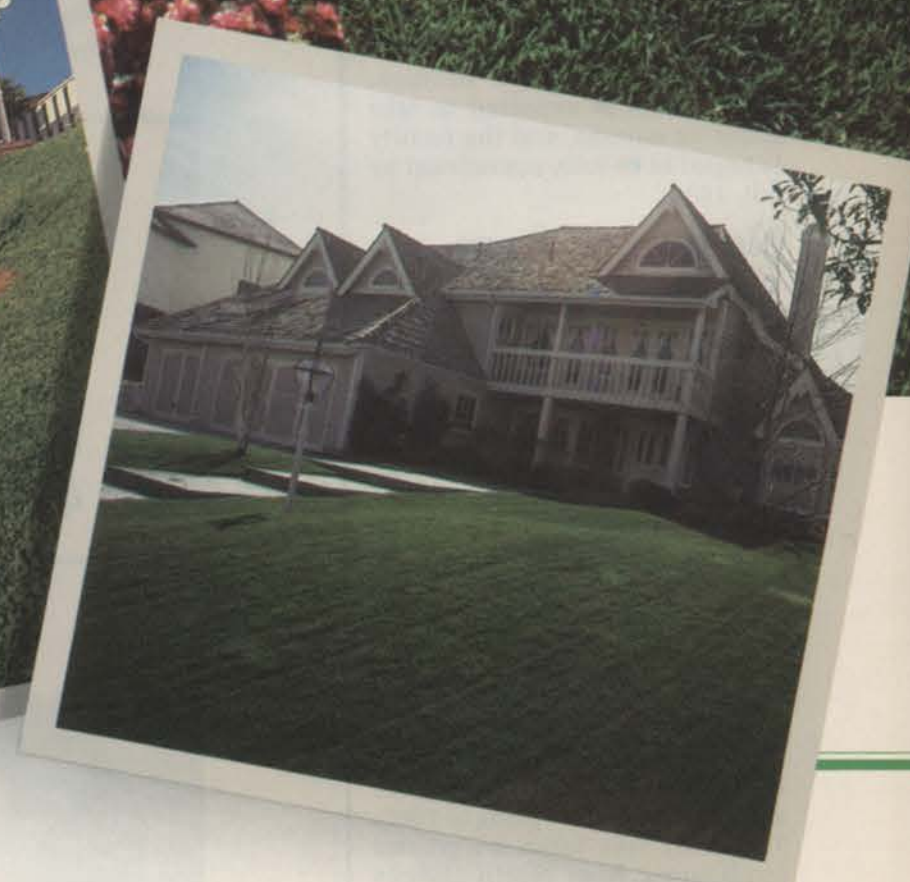
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Round up was also used for trimming and edging around new plantings, as well as follow-up maintenance.



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## LAWN CARE MARKETPLACE

## TAMPA-ST. PETERSBURG

## Climate plays havoc with lawn care

There is danger lurking amidst the idyllic palm trees, serene blue water and lush greenery of the Tampa-St. Petersburg area in the heart of Florida. It's a little bug called a mole cricket.

The problem manifests itself in many ways. Driving past a mobile home village, you might see a little gray-haired octogenarian wildly beating at the soil around her beloved plants with a shovel. You might ask her what she's doing.

"At first, I thought they were little baby birds," she would respond. "Then I found out they were mole crickets. The only way you can get rid of them is to beat their heads with a shovel."

Mole crickets are consistently cited as the No. 1 problem in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area among lawn care businessmen. But beating them with a shovel is not the only way to deal with them. Jack Arrington of Arrington Grounds Maintenance, St. Petersburg, has another way.

"Mole crickets are attracted to lights," Arrington says, "and properties with lots of lights have the worst problems. To get rid of a mole cricket, you have to catch it, place it on a block and smash it with another block."

Bob Auer of Tru-Green Lawn Care, North Clearwater, uses chemicals to halt the damaging

pest. The transplanted Cincinnati says that Tru-Green uses Oftanol. "It's expensive, but because it's the best, we use it."

Mole crickets feed on turf root systems, tunnelling beneath the surface and loosening soil so that adjacent plants die. The insect is especially damaging in Florida from late April throughout the summer.

Paul W. Meyers of Meyers Lawn Spraying does much of the mole cricket spraying in St. Petersburg. "Mole cricket calls are the backbone of the company," Meyers admits. "This year is the worst I've seen." He uses both Dursban and Oftanol.

Though competition in this gulf-coast megalopolis is stiff, there seems to be enough business to go around.

"There's as much work here as anywhere," says Glenn J. Davis of Green Grass Revival, St. Petersburg. "As hard as you want to work, there's a dollar to be earned. You can make \$100 a day just cutting lawns, if that's the size you want to stay."

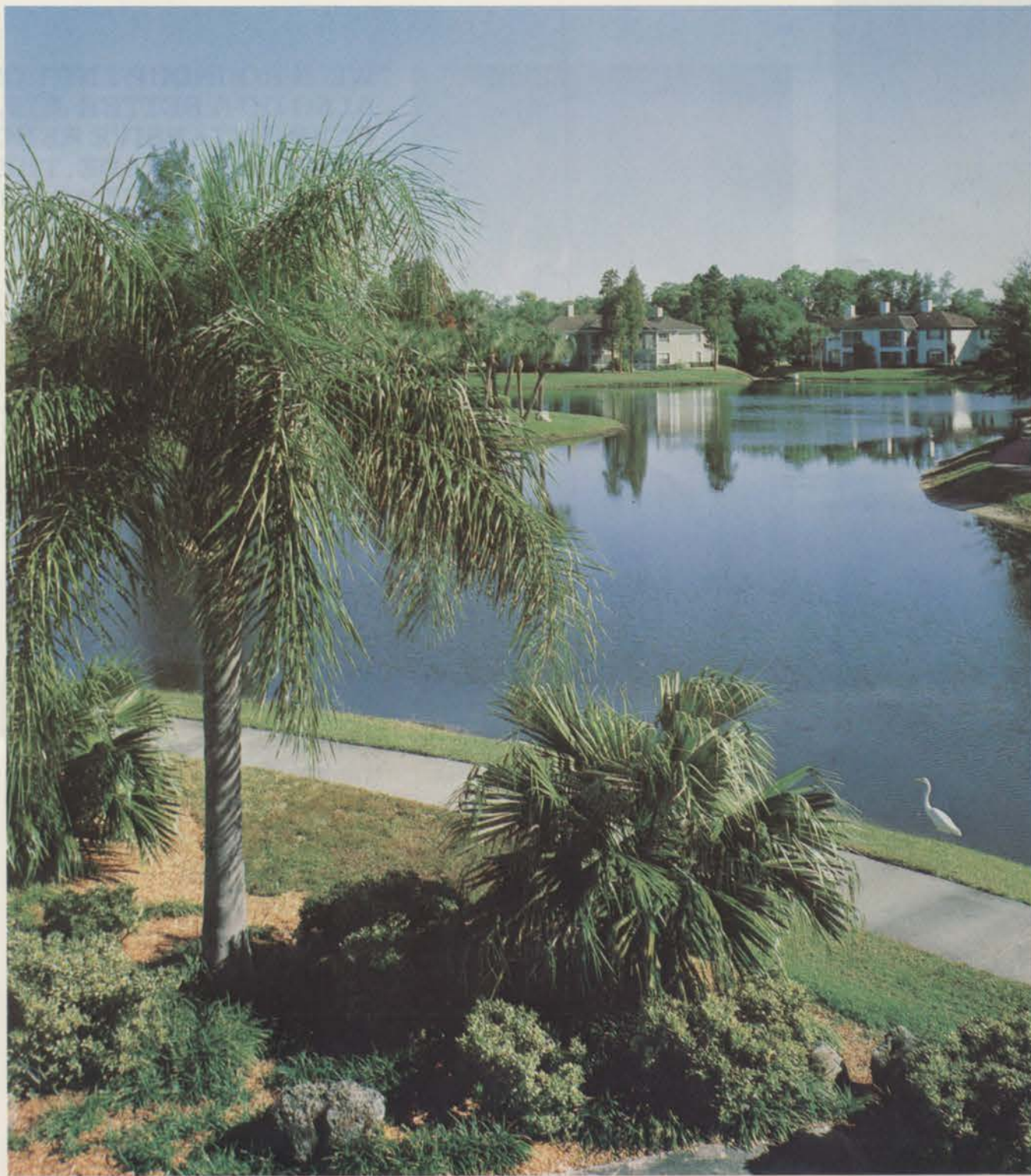
Mindy Baker of Trim-Cut, Tampa, adds, "There's plenty of business for everyone down here. There could be 10 major, major lawn care companies, and nobody would feel the effects. But there's a lot of rattail outfits."

One of the biggest businesses in the area belongs to K.C. Fisher, who considers his Landcare Industries the bay area's lawn service pioneer.

"The biggest problems around here are professionalism and getting quality people," Fisher asserts. "If you know what to do, and if you have the right people, then you don't have problems."

"There is something wrong around here. This area lacks professionalism, and customers are demanding professionalism."

Arrington, whose company is the largest in St. Pete, agrees. "We've got more customers looking for those who are totally





# Florida notebook

By Jerry Roche

A spring trip to the Tampa-St. Petersburg area did not turn out quite as expected. Though magazine editors seldom have any time for such frivolities as basking in the warm Florida sun on a Gulf Coast beach, neither do they expect to have to wear winter jackets and dodge raindrops for an entire week.

Despite the weather, Florida was an interesting place to visit, judging by people in the lawn care industry. Each had a story to tell, like Mindy Baker of Trim-Cut, Tampa, who used her MasterCard to start the business:

"We (husband Tom is the field supervisor, a former technician in NASA's space shuttle program) bought equipment on a \$50,000 MasterCard credit line," Baker remembers with a smile on her face. "Four months later, the bank called to tell us that the credit line was a computer error. But they were real nice and loaned us the money — more than \$10,000."

"The bank president's condominiums are now an account, and money is no problem."

"We're going to frame our MasterCard statement. Our children will someday marvel at that story."

## Advertising experiences

Paul W. Meyers of Meyers Lawn Spraying, St. Petersburg, sat in an office cluttered with many, many public commendation certificates he has received over the years for his involvement in community affairs. He took time to reveal his first experiences with advertising.

"I spent \$550 a month advertising in the Yellow Pages when I started, and it really paid off," Meyers said. "I also used to knock doors from sun-up to sun-down on Saturdays and Sundays. You have to do those things if you want to be successful. And at one time, we also used decal handouts which we're still getting responses from — many years later."

Meyers now handles an average of 100 accounts per month.

Icon Pest Control, Tampa, of which Steve Story is a division manager, just changed its name from Pete & Ron's Tree Service.

"The whole reason for going to Icon is expansion. We've been working on this idea for over a year now," Story said. "We care for about 250-300 lawns every two months. Residentials are our bread-and-butter, but we're looking to expand to commercial accounts soon."

## Expansion just a dream

While Icon has just expanded, such a move is still a dream for Glenn J. Davis of Green Grass Revival, St. Pete.

"I plan on stepping out of the production line of the company," he noted. "I don't plan on pushing a mower when I'm 30, in another three or four years."

"Now, I don't have enough time to drum up more business, and I'm having problems growing because I don't have a bankroll behind me."

"Success doesn't come overnight, but I can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and that's what keeps me going."

K.C. Fisher of Landcare Industries, Tampa, can talk your ear off on any of a variety of lawn care subjects. He keeps up-to-date on industry trends with a membership in the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA), and his favorite topics were routing and conversion to propane.

"We can charge a lot less because we don't use as many man-hours with our routing system," Fisher said. "When scheduling doesn't flow right, why force it to flow right?"

"We have one crew for each of the jobs on a contract. We send one crew out for trimming, one for mowing, and so on; instead of one crew doing everything on a job."

Fisher said that he has been very happy with this arrangement, as he has been happy with conversion to propane power.

"The people in ALCA are very negative about propane, though," Fisher admitted. "Maybe it's fear of the unknown. But we're saving money and we don't have any theft (of fuel) problems. Anybody who says they have a handle on gas control is ridiculous."

Jack Arrington of Arrington Grounds Maintenance, St. Petersburg, is just happy to be in business.

"I think it's wonderful that we can work with living things," Arrington said. "It really gets me sometimes that people in our industry never look at that. Too many people don't realize what they're working with here."

Arrington gathers his employees together every morning.

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Two of the biggest operators in the Tampa-St. Petersburg market are shown above and left. Top is Jack Arrington of Arrington Grounds Maintenance, St. Petersburg, with his all-aluminum truck body. Left is K.C. Fisher of Landcare Industries, Tampa, outside his office building.

honest and sincere and professional. As a matter of fact, they're demanding it.

"I get upset at people bidding jobs who make extreme errors in judgment on what a property should be bid at, because it affects the industry as whole. They end up not doing their job properly, and the industry ends up leaving money on the table."

It's well-known that climate is the No. 1 attraction of this central Florida resort area. Yet the warm weather is also attractive to a variety of weeds and diseases.

## 'Touchy situation'

"Weed control is a real touchy situation down here," Auer notes. "Up north, you can just mix everything together; but here you can't really use the same weed control, because you have a mixture of grasses that forces a double-application problem. You've got to spray once, then go in and hand-spray."

"I wish we could sell our program without weed control, but people want it."

"I get the biggest kick," Arrington adds, "out of people from other parts of the country telling me their problems. It's much easier for a Florida contractor to go north than for someone to come to Florida and do landscape contracting. I could go north and do their jobs, but they couldn't come here. On the other hand, I don't know how to winterize plants."

And then there's the sand.

"Sand tears up everything," says Davis. "My Grasshopper has a dozen bearings right in the front deck that have to be lubricated regularly. And when I'm on a job, my teeth get covered with dirt — a

film of crud, like sandpaper almost.

"They say a mower will last an average of five years longer up north than down here, because of the heat and sand. I change oil every 10-12 hours of use, grease and check blades and oil on the machines every day and clean filters every 8-10 running hours."

"When you have accounts 20 to 25 miles away, even a minor breakdown can blow half a day."

Steve Story of Icon Pest Control, Tampa, has another problem with the sand — this from the chemical lawn care professional's point of view.

"The main problem is the sandy soil leaching out nutrients," Story observes. "Iron is the one that leaches out the quickest, especially during the rainy season. So we use a 16-4-8 mixture with iron and micro-nutrients and supplements twice a year for an economical price."

## Mechanics needed

Arrington keeps four full-time mechanics on his staff.

"It's because of the fast rate of growth of grasses and foliage, and because we're running machines in wet weather, year-round, and because of the sand," he observes. "We have bahiagrass that'll grow one foot in seven days during the intense growing season. They just don't build equipment for Florida conditions. By August, even with our preventative maintenance program, we've got tremendous equipment problems."

If there exists a parallel between this area of the country and other parts, it is in dealing with customer complaints.

"Our biggest problem is making

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## Equipment expensive

# Maintenance means money

By Joseph Whalen

Lawn care today requires sophisticated and expensive equipment. A \$500 price tag on a walk-behind mower is becoming common, and many types of commercial mowing equipment carry price tags in the thousands of dollars. A replacement gasoline engine can cost as much as \$1,500, and diesel engines are even more.

The key, then, to getting your money's worth — and more — out of the engines on this equipment is maintenance.

There are three major causes of engine failures which can be avoided with relatively simple maintenance: heat, dirt, and improper adjustment. Because the last of these is the easiest to deal with, let's consider that first.

### Use manuals

Engine manufacturers provide owner's manuals which cover some adjustment procedures, and they also make available more detailed service and repair instructions which are available through Authorized Engine Service Dealers and Distributors who are listed in the Yellow Pages under "Engines-Gasoline." Such manuals will provide detailed instructions on carburetor adjustment to assure quick starts and smooth operation and fuel efficiency.

Hard starting when hot or even an after-shutoff backfire could be the result of an improperly adjusted idle stop on the carburetor. Engine failure from overspeeding can result from a misadjusted governor. All such adjustment procedures are covered in the service and repair instructions.

These manuals will also provide instructions for more complex internal repairs to the engine.

When making these repairs, it is critical to pay careful attention to the torque applied to the various fasteners. In fact, there are three parts of the air-cooled engine where use of the torque wrench is absolutely critical: the flywheel nut or starter clutch, the cylinder head, and the connecting rod bolts.

When reinstalling the flywheel after replacing breaker points or performing other service to an air-cooled engine, clean the tapers of the flywheel and the crankshaft. The mating of these tapers keeps the flywheel in place, and the only way to be sure that the tapers are mated properly is to use a torque wrench and tighten the flywheel nut to the torque specified in the repair instruction.

Most people have a tendency to undertighten fasteners. A flywheel that is loose will vibrate and crack, or at least cause the flywheel key to shear. On the other hand, an overly tightened

flywheel can split. By the way, when removing a flywheel, use an appropriate flywheel puller.

Connecting rod bolts must also be tightened to a specified torque. The bearing surface in the connecting rod is machined with the connecting rod bolts tightened to specification. Loose or overly tightened connecting rod bolts provide an uneven bearing surface and the resultant friction causes terrific heat build-up which leads to rod failure. Frequently, such failure will result in the need to replace a short block or the entire engine. Big dollars are involved in these repairs.

### Stagger sequence

Cylinder head bolts must also be properly torqued. Stagger the tightening sequence according to the pattern in the service and repair manual, and it's always a good idea to tighten in 50 inch-pound increments. Improper tightening can result in blown head gaskets and/or a warped cylinder head which will in turn bring about hard starting and a se-

vere power loss.

Removal of the cylinder head is an important part of routine maintenance for it enables a mechanic to remove combustion deposits from the cylinder head, piston, and valves. Excess combustion deposits can cause rough running and overheating from pre-ignition. This is particularly true if the engine is run at a constant speed for long periods of time. Combustion deposits should be removed after approximately 250 hours of operation. Use a wooden or plastic scraper to avoid damage to the sealing surfaces and also use a new and genuine replacement head gasket when reinstalling the cylinder head.

Combustion deposits can affix themselves to valve seats or valve faces, making for hard starts and robbing power. Valves held open by combustion deposits will also burn prematurely. Burned valves should be replaced; when replacing valves, make sure that the clearance between the valve stem and tappet is set to manufacturer's specification.

### Second cause

The second major cause of engine failure is dirt. Air-cooled engines consume about 10,000 gallons of air for each gallon of fuel they burn. If that air is not properly cleaned, it introduces abrasive dirt into the engine. The air cleaner must be intact and the element must be kept clean. A good way to check a paper element air cleaner is to put a light bulb inside it. A paper element that is too dirty to let light pass won't let air pass, either. This inspection will also reveal holes in the element. Once an air cleaner



Scoring from dirt inside engine



Improperly maintained cleaner element



element has a hole in it, that hole becomes the path of least resistance and all the required air and the dirt that is in that air will enter the engine through that hole.

Air cleaner elements are often damaged by persons using jackknives, putty knives, or keys as cleaning tools. Some people use compressed air to clean elements. In doing so, they are likely to blow a hole in the air cleaner. To properly clean a paper element air cleaner, tap it on a hard surface. If it cannot be cleaned by that means, replace it with a genuine replacement part supplied by the engine manufacturer.

### Tight seal

It is critical that there be a tight seal between the air cleaner element and its cover and backing plate. We have repeated reports of non-genuine "will-fit" air cleaner elements (which are too big and are crushed in the air cleaner assembly) or too small (permitting air and dirt to pass around the filter element). The use of such parts will lead to premature failure of the engine and, of course, voids the engine warranty. If the air cleaner backing plate or cover becomes damaged, it also must be replaced to ensure an air filtration system that is free of leaks.

Oil bath air cleaners have, by and large, been replaced by oil-soaked foam air cleaners. To service the foam-type air cleaner, remove it from the engine and wash thoroughly in detergent and water. Rinse the element and then squeeze it dry, then dry the element more with a paper towel. Place a generous quantity of oil on the element and squeeze it to distribute the oil and squeeze out any excess. Replace the element on the engine.

We do not recommend washing oil foam elements in solvent because solvent left in the element will dilute the oil added to it and permit the oil to be drawn into the engine and burned. A dry element permits dirt to pass through it.

Engine manufacturers have been offering double air cleaners consisting of a paper element surrounded by an oil-soaked foam pre-cleaner. These are particularly effective.

### What to check

When servicing air cleaner elements, check the air cleaner and carburetor mounting to be sure that gaskets are not broken or missing which would permit unfiltered air to enter the engine. Also, unfiltered air can get into the carburetor through broken tubes or elbows from an internally-vented breather.

Another way dirt gets into the engine is through the oil fill opening. Before opening the crankcase plug or removing the dipstick, wipe away any accumulated dirt and grass clippings from the oil fill area. It is generally a good practice to keep the external surfaces of the engine clean. Once inside the engine, dirt causes wear to all engine surfaces such as pistons, rings, cylinder bores, and bearings, and necessary repairs

are time consuming and expensive.

Heat is another major cause of engine failure. There are two primary sources of heat in the air-cooled engine: heat from friction and heat from combustion. To minimize heat from friction, keep an adequate supply of a quality oil at the proper viscosity in the engine at all times. To assure the proper level of oil, check the dipstick or the oil fill before each use and every five hours thereafter.

Oil appropriate for use in air-cooled gasoline engines should be rated SC, SD, SE, SF, or MS. Oil viscosity is also important. For summer use, SAE 30 weight oil is recommended. For temperatures below 32 degrees, use 5W20 or 5W30 oil. Insufficient oil results

in severe heat build up, scoring, and breakage. Also, too much oil can cause an engine to overheat. Oil additives are not recommended for use in air-cooled engines.

Air-cooled engines have to be kept cool. Cooling air enters the engine through the grass screen over the flywheel. That screen and any air intake leading to the screen must be kept open. Also the cooling fins on the cylinder and cylinder head must be kept clear of grass clippings and other debris. Such material will insulate the cylinder head causing overheating, and on engines equipped with an air vane governor, blockage of the air flow past the governor vane will cause the

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Joseph Whalen



Joseph Whalen is Manager of Technical Services at Wisconsin Magneto, Inc., a distributor of gasoline and diesel engines, engine parts and equipment parts. He conducts training seminars on engine repairs and serves as a consultant on technical service and warranty problems.

# MIGHTY. SMALL.

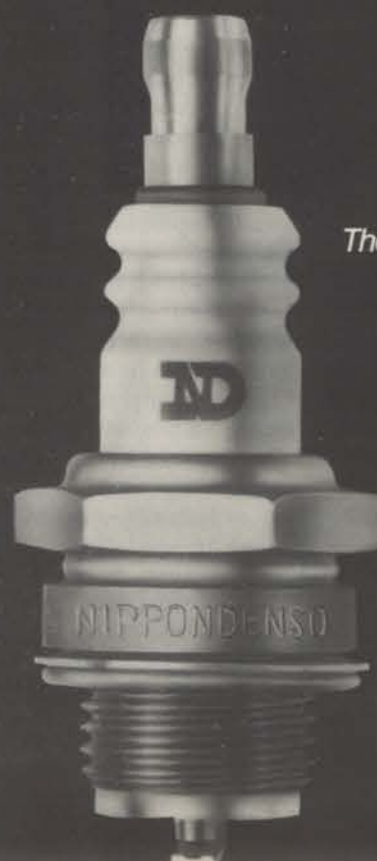
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from page 1

Because of a good response from the newsletter, the Doughertys are considering adding lawn care weed and disease control divisions to the nursery.

"We are looking to make the business a year-long commitment and this (lawn care) would dovetail nicely into our current business," she said.

A further example of a working husband-and-wife team is Super Green Lawn Service in Warren, Ohio, where Marti Mock is vice-president. Mock, whose husband Ken started the six-year-old business because he was "dissatisfied sitting behind a desk," says the business has evolved steadily despite some of the inherent hardships of working as a husband-and-wife partnership.

### Late hours

"I don't want to paint too rosy a picture," she said. "The wife has to be prepared to not see much of her husband during the peak seasons. It's not like a nine-to-five job. A lot of the time, he's out until 9:30 at night, and that can get pretty lonesome sometimes."

However, the company has grown recently with the addition of a new truck and one part-time and two full-time employees during the peak season. Mock said, in addition, that Super Green is considering the addition of a computer system for billing and receiving, and has planned to expand its business site to house company inventory.

Although she does not draw a salary, Mock said they had considered one for tax purposes. Her duties include getting mailings ready for the start of the spring season — including promotional material and brochures — and answering the telephones.

That may not be the most glamorous side of the business, but Mock said her efforts have to be coordinated with her husband's in order to be successful. "I guess I'm old-fashioned," she said, "but I feel the wife should go with whatever her husband wants her to."

"You have to give him support. He always consults me, but I rarely discourage him."

Another dedicated business wife is Cathy Juntgen, a majority stockholder along with her husband in Emerald Green, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Juntgen said she handles all the office duties, including billing and receiving, answering the phones and routing the crews. Being married, she said, works to the company's advantage because "nothing falls in the cracks and everything gets done."

### Wise advice

Her parents gave her some wise business advice — when you have your own business, it owns you; you don't own it — which she has followed.

"I learned from them that it would take a lot of work," Juntgen admits. "I'm not making as much as when I worked somewhere else, but in order to make a go of

# Sacrifices key to women's success

it, you have to make the sacrifice."

Some of the drawbacks to starting a family-run business, Juntgen said, are more than just financial. The company cannot, for instance, afford to purchase life insurance like larger more profitable companies. However, they are investigating the possibility of office computerization, which, she said, she has not had time to pursue otherwise.

But both she and her husband follow through together on all decisions concerning marketing and advertising, which she finds highly gratifying. Juntgen also says that since the Fort Wayne economy is on the upswing, five years from now Emerald Green "will be all set."

If Mock, Dougherty and Juntgen represent the most typical examples of women entering the lawn care industry, Sandy Nelson, president and general manager of Liqui-Lawn, Niles, Mich., is one of the few women who do absolutely everything, from hiring and firing to personnel and purchasing to the formulation of chemicals and marketing.



Juntgen



Nelson



Sawka



Style

years of sacrifice."

In addition to building her own spray equipment ("the most frustrating part of the business"), Nelson said that it has been most satisfying to consult with other lawn care companies. She has been successful in helping other companies plan the conversion from liquid to dry fertilizer.

Such diversity has helped Liqui-Lawn over the recent national economic adversity. "There's a lot of competition in the area," she noted, "but we're starting to see an improvement in the overall business."

Nelson also said that earning the respect of people in a field dominated by men was necessary before the company was successful — "but I haven't found it too hard. My best advice is to learn the business."

Deanna Walker and Pam Craig are partners in Mere Women Landscaping, Bellingham, Wash., a business with one of the most unique names in the industry.

"We named it thinking it would be attractive to business," Walker said. "And it has been."

The two partners work eight-

hour days and split administrative work on the contracts. They have been in business for six years, and have found that sex basically has no bearing on their effectiveness.

"Our sex doesn't enter into the business, other than people thinking it's unique that two women could be so successful in lawn care," Walker said. "The other unique thing about Mere Women Landscaping is that we both still spend a lot of time making sure the quality standards of our workmanship are high."

Two of the crew superintendents at Mere Women are female.

Like Nelson, Walker and Craig, Melanie Sawka of Reinhold Landscaping, Flat Rock, Mich., has total control over the operation of the business. She is president of Reinhold, the company founded by her father about 50 years ago.

Being a woman in the field, she said, is an advantage "because

people remember you quickly." She has also been asked by other companies if women salespeople are too much of a risk.

"I tell them that women are a definite asset to the company's sales force. I primarily sell to men as the purchasing agent and manager," she said. "I think women entering the business are going to be doubted at first, so they have to be prepared to handle that."

"But women definitely have the advantage over men in salesmanship. And my employees have no difficulty remembering who the boss is."

Sawka's advice to those who may be hesitant about entering a male dominated field is to get a solid background in the mechanics of doing business and in the science of the product itself.

### Working up

Though women owners are the exception rather than the rule, a growing number have worked up through the ranks. One is Pat Style, executive manager of Keystone Lawn Spray, Wayne, Pa.

Style said she doesn't consider the business as exclusively a man's world. "The bottom line is profit," she said. "You cannot separate the two."

Style started as an office manager, then developed various advertising and marketing campaigns for Keystone Construction Services' lawn spray division. As executive manager, she hires headquarters staff (approximately 40 persons) and coordinates company planning and advertising. Her next goal is to become involved in the technical side of the business.

This business, the women all agree, is not particularly lucrative at the outset. Juntgen summed it up by advising other women entering the field to "be ready for second and third mortgages, and for giving up vacations. It's the kids first, the business second and we're last."

"But if you want it badly enough, you can do it," she said.

"All in all, it is satisfying to have a business of your own," noted Mock. "and not to have to answer to anybody." However, she added, women have to be prepared to very limited mobility as the business requires practically all of one's time.

"My advice for couples getting involved in the business," said Dougherty, "is to try to plan as much as you can before you get into it. There are rewards, but you have to be adventurous to take the steps to make it work. You can't be too cautious."

### It pays off

While none of the women interviewed painted a particularly rosy picture, all have said that the early investment of time and money will pay off in independence and security over the long run.

They have each learned in their own way that no field is closed to people whose hard work is appreciated.



# Water could be problem

He has said it before, and he's saying it again: "I certainly think that water is the No. 1 problem facing the turfgrass industry in the next several decades."

The person quoted? None other than Dr. James Beard of Texas A&M University's Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, one of the foremost authorities in the country, and author of five books in the last 10 years.

"We could save 25 percent of the water we are now using, just by doing what we already know should be done," says Beard, citing a real need for research into water-saving devices which can be implemented by the entire industry, including lawn care professionals. "Our goal in research, when combined with existing knowledge, is to save 50 percent of the water we now use."

Future projections, particularly for urban areas, Dr. Beard further notes, indicate that less water — perhaps in lower quality — will be available to the turfgrass industry. In some more arid areas, Dr. Beard claims, the turfgrass manager may be forced to cease irrigation of certain areas.

## Possible solution

A possible solution might be increasing the amount of water actually absorbed by a plant for metabolic-growth processes. Under normal circumstances, only one to three percent of the water absorbed is actually used, and the rest is lost by transpiration and evaporation. Most turfgrasses across the country, Beard notes, use between one-tenth and three-tenths of an inch of water per day, though in some cases a grass will need as much as a half-inch of water per day.

Two means of physically altering turfgrass so that it requires less water are through anti-transpirants and through growth inhibitors.

Anti-transpirants reduce the rate of water loss through stomatal openings in leaves. There has been some success with coatings sprayed on the leaves in the case of transplanted ornamental plants, but such plastic and wax coating materials haven't proven effective on turfgrasses because the period of effectiveness is

short-lived due to frequent mowings.

Growth inhibitors, however, are another story.

"We have had a breakthrough which led us into preliminary research in the use of growth inhibitors which have proven to result in a 30 percent reduction in water use," Beard says. "And I think that, in the next five to 10 years, you'll also see the further development of root growth enhancers."

Of special interest to lawn care

professionals is the effect their work has on turfgrass water use rate. For instance, some pre-emergence herbicides have varying degrees of toxicity to turfgrass roots, and excessive nitrogen applications also create a carbohydrate deficit that can kill roots, forcing an increase in water use rate.

Cultural practices which minimize the rooting depth will also prohibit the turf from drawing moisture from a greater portion of the soil profile and thus hasten

the onset of drought stress, Beard says.

"For the lawn care professional, the key is the judicious use of chemicals, only as needed to solve a problem and no more," Beard concludes. "Lawn care professionals should be knowledgeable about the problem and their possible solutions and get educated in this area."

Dr. James Beard



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## COVERAGE from page 1

papers across the country, including the Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

Mary Battista took the nurseryman's slant in a story called "Weekend Infantry Opens Annual Battle," which appeared in the April 18th Washington Post.

Yet another story appeared in USA Today, the Gannett Company's national daily newspaper.



# NEWSMAKERS



Oscar Benson

For 20 years, **Oscar Benson** has been winning the approval of colleagues in the agricultural chemical advertising industry. His ad campaigns for Mobay Chemical Corp. are among the most-honored in the industry.

But April 1, Benson closed his successful career in advertising, in favor of a new one — his first love, farming.

Always the gentleman, Benson has been held in the highest regard by the advertising agencies that have

been associated with him.

"Oscar takes the Socratic approach," says **Dave Jewell**, account supervisor with Barickman Advertising, agency for Mobay Specialty Products. "He demands good work. He's not a push-over. Yet, he never loses his temper. He always asks the right questions in the right way. The result: people will go miles out of their way to do their best work for Oscar and Mobay."

"He will be missed."



Gary Weems



David Park

ers. Parks graduated from the University of Missouri at Rolla with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in 1979.

**Dr. Gary W. Moorman** has joined the Department of Plant Pathology of the Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Moorman has received degrees from the University of Maine, the University of Vermont and North Carolina State.

When the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation had its conference in Lansing this spring, **Clem Wolf-rom** was given the Meritorious Service Award by Past President **Jim Timmerman**. Other award-winners were: **Ray Hearn** of St. Clair Shores, Burt Bradshaw Outstanding four-year turf major student; **Kurt Galisdorfer** of Racine, Wisc. and **Michael Kositke** of Appleton, Wisc., Norman W. Kramer Outstanding Scholar awards; **Lee Berndt** of Shepherd and **David Hollens** of Lake Orion, TUCO scholarships.

**Kent G. Kepner** has been appointed chief test engineer for Jacobsen Division of Textron, Inc. Kepner will be responsible for establishing testing and evaluation programs for Jacobsen prototypes and components.



Kent Kepner



James Donohue

**James Donohue** has been named regional sales manager for the Midwest region of Flymo, Inc., a maker of gas and electric air-cushioned mowers and an electric cultivator. Donohue joins Flymo following sales positions with Lawn Boy and C.J. Hech lawn equipment distributor.

Retired golf course superintendent **Warren Bidwell** has joined the Tee-2-Green Corporation, marketer of Penncross and Penneagle bentgrass seed, as a speaker and guest lecturer. Bidwell has given speeches all over the world. To contact Bidwell about speaking, call Tee-2-Green at (800) 547-0255.

**Larry D. Meyers** has been named vice-president for legislative affairs and **Diane Bateman** has been chosen as his assistant by The Fertilizer Institute. A native of Texas, Meyers received his bachelor's degree in business/marketing in 1971 from Texas Tech University. Bateman most recently served as administrative assistant to Sen. Lowell P. Weicker (R-Conn.).

**John Schwarz** of Addison, Ill. has been elected president of the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association. **George Koziarz** of Glenview is executive vice-president, **John Hendrickson** of Wheeling is vice-president, and **Kenneth Gallt** of Lombard is treasurer. Chairman of the Board is **Chuck Carren** of Northbrook and sergeant-at-arms is **Bill Davids** of Blue Island. Directors are **Bill Muehlenbeck**, **Roger Lemke**, **Tom Trayser**, **Andy Galatte**, **Gene Rausch**, **Larry Studer** and **Ted Tecza**.

**Gary W. Weems** of Hydro-Plant, Inc. has been named 1984 chairman of the National Landscape Industry Show. The show is April 28-29 in Anaheim, Calif.

**David Park** has been appointed design engineer for Dixon Industries, Inc., manufacturer of Dixon Zero Turning Radius riding mow-

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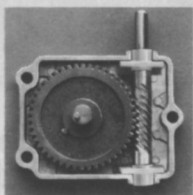
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# Business booms in our industry

from page 1

used Oftanol for its late May application to try and pick up some grub and sod webworm control. "I think this might have tripped a few people our way," he says.

"I think the business will be there," predicts Bill Shearman of Chem-Trol in Florida, N.Y. "We'll probably start off on the slow side and pick up in the fall. Tight money has been a factor, but I'm expecting it to loosen up by summer or early fall."

Shearman said that business last year wasn't what he had originally expected, the same problem newcomer John Haubrich of Grounds Care in Loveland, Ohio, is experiencing this year.

## Slow start

"We're getting off to a little slower start than I had planned saleswise," Haubrich says. "We're anticipating a 30 to 50 percent growth, but you've got to remember that we didn't get started in business until March of last year."

"We've gotten very good acceptance. Cincinnati's been very weak in landscape maintenance, but now we've got last year's base

to build on."

Thomas Mauer of Mountain View Lawn Care in Holyoke, Mass. and Duane Saxton of Liqui-Lawn Corp. in Lewiston, Maine, both had good increases in business last year, as the lawn care industry proved that it is here to stay — despite the recession.

"We've had pretty steady growth," says Mauer, "including doing fairly well last year. The latter part of last year was particularly good, but that's when we really push to pick up customers. We grew probably 15 percent last year."

"We've got some new competitors, but they're all good companies. I think there's plenty of jobs out there for everyone, and we look for steady growth again this year."

Saxton's company has gone from four applications in 1982 to five in 1983, a trend among some lawn care businesses.

"Soil tests indicate the need for sulphur, and our fifth application will be sulphur," Saxton reveals. "It is not optional: it comes with the service. I believe the majority of the people — if I've presented myself as a competent professional — will not argue with

me as to the benefits of adding sulphur."

"As for business, I'm optimistic, basically because of last year, which was a good year for us. And I don't visualize being any worse this year."

Drew Tomlinson of Lawnscape in Petersburg, Pa. and Ross Flood of Tierra Vista in Tulsa, Okla. have experienced incredible growth lately.

"We have grown 100 percent each of the three years we've been in business," Tomlinson says. "Our outlook continues to be good, though I don't expect our growth to equal that of the last few years."

## New branch

Flood's company has opened a new branch in Oklahoma City. At

the time of his interview, Tierra Vista had topped all of its projected sales before even starting the annual "spring sell."

"We also just completed a half-million-dollar maintenance facility in Tulsa that we're pretty proud of," Flood says. "It's got everything, including a soil testing lab."

Last year, the lawn care industry grew 23 percent, according to this magazine's "State of the Industry" report. No one quite knows what 1983 will hold, but the astute lawn care businessman stands a better chance than his counterparts in other industries of continued growth.

Like Tomlinson says: "People who are interested in their lawns looking nice will always put that money aside."

## TOOLS, TIPS, TECHNIQUES

### Fungicide timetable

When is the correct time to apply fungicides? According to the New York Turfgrass Association's April, 1983 newsletter, here are general guidelines:

**LEAF SPOT — Preventive:** during extended periods of moist, cool weather. **Curative:** as soon as leaf spots appear.

**DOLLAR SPOT — Preventive:** during periods of warm (70-80 degrees) weather and high humidity and low soil moisture. **Curative:** as soon as leaf symptoms appear.

**BROWN PATCH — Preventive:** during extended periods of high temperature (80-85 degrees) and high humidity that leaves dew on the leaf blades. **Curative:** as soon as patch symptoms appear.

**PYTHIUM BLIGHT — Preventive:** during periods of hot weather (85-95 degrees) and high moisture conditions. **Curative:** usually too late once symptoms appear.

**FUSARIUM BLIGHT — Preventive:** treatment must begin early in summer in areas most susceptible. **Curative:** usually not effective.

**SMUTS — Preventive:** late fall or early spring. **Curative:** usually not effective.

**RUSTS — Preventive:** late fall or early spring. **Curative:** as soon as rust appears.

**MILDEW — Preventive:** during cloudy, cool, humid periods. **Curative:** whenever mildew appears.

**SNOW MOLD — Preventive:** before first lasting snows with reapplication during mid-winter thaw. **Curative:** difficult to achieve.

**RED THREAD — Preventive:** during warm periods (68-75 degrees) and high humidity. **Curative:** whenever symptoms appear.

**ANTHRACNOSE — Preventive:** prolonged high humidity and temperature (80-85 degrees). **Curative:** anytime disease appears.



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# Florida

from page 11

customers understand that lawn maintenance is a professional business," says Baker. "So many times, we have to tell people on the phone, 'No, we don't just mow yards.'"

"People also have to understand that we're working with nature. It's hard for them to understand that, as a rule of thumb, it takes one to two years to make a lawn look good."

"Somehow, you have to get the customer's trust," adds Auer.

To which Glenn R. Duncan of Duncan Landscape Maintenance, Pinellas Park, has a ready answer:

"Our customers never seem to have enough money to do things



Auer



Meyers



Davis



Baker



Story



Duncan

right. Yet my customers think I only have one customer, and that's them. I try to keep it that way."

Duncan places top priority on a short response time to individual customer complaints using an advanced communications system.

"Communication is the biggest part of the success of my business," Duncan observes. "I've spent a lot of money on it: before I had a secretary, I had a mobile telephone and an answering service. I can call back customers when they have complaints — within minutes."

Duncan also has a computer.

"Whenever economics demanded a change, I changed," he continues. "Buying a computer and a two-way radio was a necessity if I was to grow."

"You have to know exactly where your people are, if you want to make money."

"The computer controls customers, the radio controls employees, more or less."

Yes, Florida is the Sunshine State. But it's also the state of diverse lawn care problems — problems you can't even begin to imagine unless you deal with

them on a day-to-day basis.

"You've got to know the area," notes Fisher. "For instance: in St. Pete the pH is high, in Tampa it isn't. We've got some of the best farmland in the United States, and not many people know that."

"The biggest difference between Florida and other areas," Arrington adds, "is the growth pattern. It's just amazing that it's 20 percent harder to take care of lawns in St. Petersburg than in Orlando, and that it's about 10 percent easier in Tampa than in St. Petersburg."

Auer sums things up nicely:

"In Florida, most of the people lived up north, retired and moved here. You get a lot of them who had no lawn problems there, then wonder why they have problems down here."

"You have to tell them that it's a whole different ballgame."

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## PRODUCTS

### Aeration machine is self-propelled

Turfco, Inc. has introduced an innovative self-propelled lawn aeration machine designed for all types of soil.



The machine effectively penetrates hard surfaces such as clay and gumbo soils, yet it is light enough to easily operate and fast enough to cover rather large areas in a short length of time.

The Turfco Turf Plugger is powered by a three-horsepower Briggs & Stratton four-cycle engine. It has eight solid steel tines to remove a plug  $\frac{1}{16}$ ths of an inch in diameter and  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches deep. The chain-driven Turf Plugger can aerate at a rate of 400 square feet per minute.

Another feature is the alignment of the outer tines, allowing the machine to operate within two to three inches of obstructions.

Circle no. 150 on Reader Inquiry Card

### Spreader designed for professionals

Country Manufacturing Inc. of Fredericktown, Ohio, has come out with a new Estate "Turf" Spreader for granular materials. It is designed for use on lawns and commercial properties.

The 800-pound load capacity of the Estate "Turf" Spreader covers three to four acres. It spreads seed,



fertilizer, lime, and other granular products. The zero- to three-square-inch calibration opening allows controlled application.

Major features include high flotation turf tires, heavy structural steel chassis, polyethylene hopper and throttle control of calibration door. The spreading unit is ground-driven so no PTO is needed.

Circle no. 151 on Reader Inquiry Card

### EPA approves growth regulator

The Environmental Protection Agency issued its approval recently for the use of 3M's Embark plant regulator to suppress *poa annua* seedhead development on golf course fairways. The approved rate is  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint per acre.

Embark has been used extensively to reduce mowing costs on low-maintenance grasses and difficult-to-mow areas by highway maintenance crews and others since its introduction in 1978.

Circle no. 152 on Reader Inquiry Card

### Aeri-seeder can be profit-maker

The Olathe Manufacturing Model 84 Aeri-Seeder is a self-propelled walk-behind seeder/aerator that puts seed into the ground for high germination with fewer pounds of seed required.

This versatile, profit-making machine plants bluegrass, rye, fescue and virtually any other seed accurately and efficiently.

Circle no. 153 on Reader Inquiry Card



New office

Members of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America Board of Directors and their guests are shown in front of the new office building in Marietta, Ga. during its grand opening held May 9. Address of the PLCAA's new administrative headquarters is P.O. Box 70455, Marietta, GA, 30007. The telephone number there is (404) 977-5222, which can be remembered easily: (404) 97-PLCAA.

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# New Dursban 50W. Awesome bug control is here.

Now DURSBAN\* insecticide, with three formulations, gives you awesome control of bugs, grubs, mites, chiggers, ticks, fleas and weevils.

New DURSBAN 50W is a wettable powder especially for professionals who prefer lower phytotoxicity in treating turf, ornamentals and trees. The elimination of chemical solvents makes this possible. DURSBAN 50W gives extended residual control...eight weeks and more compared to four or six weeks with most other brands.

So now you can do the whole job with DURSBAN 2E, concentrated 4E and new DURSBAN 50W wettable powder. That assures you of maximum bug control

and minimum inventory problems.

With all the advantages, you'd expect DURSBAN to cost more. Actually it costs less than most other brands. You can treat 1,000 sq. ft. for only 35¢! And when you use DURSBAN, it means fewer callbacks and more satisfied customers. That's a big step in the right direction.

DURSBAN products are available from your Dow distributor. Also ask him about our "DURSBAN delivers the goods" incentive program. Be sure to read and follow all label directions and precautions. Agricultural Products Department, Midland, Michigan 48640.

## DURSBAN 50W

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Circle No. 104 on Reader Inquiry Card

3915



## MARKETING IDEA FILE

### Lawn care calendar

As an additional service to customers, and as a means to attract new customers, Hydro Lawn of Gaithersburg, Md. has come up with this novel idea: issuing a Lawn & Garden Calendar to customers.

The calendar provides lawn and garden tips for home gardeners, including sections on planting and transplanting, canning tomatoes, pruning flowers and trees, and watering of potted plants.

The calendar lists phone numbers to call for customer service on each page (for easy reference), and also describes the Hydro Lawn

program at appropriate places throughout the calendar.

In one section, the calendar answers "Why fertilize your lawn now?" And at the end of the month-by-month listings gives "Tips for Growing a Healthy Lawn."

For further reference, a section of interest to homeowners lists different factors to be taken into consideration when caring for a lawn: weeds, thatch, watering, mowing, insects and diseases.

Finally, included in the calendar are four business reply cards labelled "Tell a Friend?" to be sent to Hydro Lawn by its customers as referrals.

## Everything you never expected from a tall fescue



New Jaguar: the tall fescue you've been waiting for. Denser, greener, and lower growing than ordinary tall fescues. It has all the winning performance characteristics that put it in a class by itself.

Bred for overall beauty, Jaguar is tough enough to take care of itself. A second generation cultivar, its parents were selected for resistance to disease, notably *Rhizoctonia* brown patch.

Jaguar stands up to heavy wear with improved leafiness, darker green color, and is easily mowed. It thrives in hot

weather and drought, thanks to its deeper root system.

Field trials demonstrate excellent overall performance and adaptability to shady, low-light areas. Its lower maintenance requirements for watering, fertilizing, and mowing mean lower costs—good news for those responsible for parks, sports turf areas, and home lawns.

For the full story on Jaguar, the energy-efficient grass of the future, see us.

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Circle No. 107 on Reader Inquiry Card

## PRODUCTS



### Grass Caddy has 16-bushel hopper

Cushman OMC Lincoln has introduced the new Grass Caddy grass catcher for its Front Line out-front mower. The Grass Caddy features a 16-bushel hopper and chute made of durable cross-linked polyolefin. It mounts to the side of the special-design 60-inch deck and tractor opposite the trimming side of the deck, so it doesn't interfere with up-close trimming.

The dumping system is hydraulically operated from the driver's seat, and there is no separate blower to maintain. The operator can dump clippings into a container or pick-up bed with 4½-foot sides.

Circle no. 154 on Reader Inquiry Card

### Electric sprayer goes into corners

The new Dobbins CS-18 electric power sprayer brings the convenience of electric power spraying to the farthest corners of the largest lawns, according to Master Manufacturing.

The CS-18 tows behind an ordinary garden tractor, using the tractor's 12-volt battery as the power source.



Attachments include a boom assembly which produces an 80-inch spray pattern; a hand-held spray gun for spot spraying with a pump rated at 45 psi and an 18-gallon polyethylene tank.

Circle no. 155 on Reader Inquiry Card

### Applicator adaptable to lawn situations

The Reeser rope-wick herbicide applicator called "Dab-It" has proven to be effective in the lawn care industry.

Hand-wicks and Dab-Its are available for weed and grass control on and along sidewalks, around trees, shrubs, poles and buildings. Each type has an exclusive rubber seal in the fill caps.

The new convertible model Dab-It converts to seven-inch or 11-inch lengths, T- or U-shapes or a 45-degree hand-held weed wiper. One model has an optional sight gauge.

Circle no. 156 on Reader Inquiry Card



# WHY do customers leave?

By Peter H. Connelly

Why do customers leave your service?

If you don't know the answer to this question, you should. It's costing you money now, and it may cost you your business later.

All of us engaged in business in the "private sector" are influenced by customer attrition. None of us is guaranteed a segment of business for any longer than it takes to refile for an elapsed patent, open a new course, lower prices, develop a better product or open a new branch.

This is why customer attrition is so important. We must constantly identify why our customers leave our service. And once the reasons are identified, we must determine what measures are necessary to (1) stop our customers from leaving; and (2) interest them in re-subscribing once they leave. When these determinations are made, we can look at the costs associated with the measures and determine whether we can afford them.

If we can, indeed, afford to take customer-saving measures, we can increase our chances of staying in the marketplace and of producing a profit. If, on the other hand, we cannot afford these measures, our choices are narrowed to increasing the profitability of our existing services and accepting customer attrition — or ultimately going out of business.

The question of why customers cancel is not an easy one to answer. All of us would like to think that we are doing the best possible job of satisfying our customers. It's only human.

## Ignore feelings

But in order to determine why our customers cancel, we must ignore feelings of personal pride and scrutinize all phases of our organization. This introspection is usually painful, but only when we look at all aspects of our organization with complete objectivity can we accomplish the goal of determining why our customers are leaving.

If you have no means for determining this within your company, find them!

There are a number of ways. One of the best is to take an exit survey of all cancelled accounts. Such a survey should be composed of a dozen or so questions directed to your cancelled account, which will help you determine what your service failed to do for each customer. These surveys can be mailed to cancellations or telephoned, depending on the size of your business, the number of cancellations and the resources available. Which questions to ask can be easily determined by surveying

old cancellation requests or by asking your staff.

Once the surveys are returned, tabulate the different categories into which the cancellations fall. Basically, you will notice two distinct groups: willing cancellations and unwilling cancellations.

Unwilling cancellations are those who cancelled due to reasons beyond their control: moving, transfers, divorces, death, construction in the lawn, and others.

Willing cancellations are, obviously, more important. This group cancels for correctable reasons, and this is where introspection is so important. Often, the initial reason listed for cancellation is not the real reason. It may be hard to believe that a customer might not tell you why he is unhappy with your service, but your surveys will show that — after making the decision to cancel — customers want to give you a reason which you cannot discredit.

to page 27



Peter H. Connelly is division head of Hydro Lawn Spray, Salem, Va., a division of W.S. Connelly & Co. Inc. The information from this article came from a recent in-house one-day seminar involving the subject of growth and cancellations.

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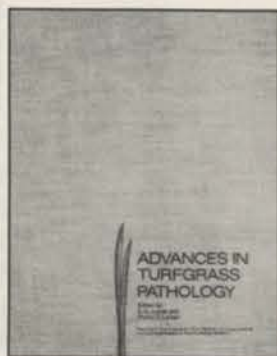
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## HELP WANTED

"Sales representative wanted for growing turf supply company. Reply in strictest confidence by resume to Personnel Director, Lakeshore Equipment & Supply Co., 300 South Abbe, P.O. Box 4015 Elyria, OH 44036." 9/83

Join a growing, 3½ million dollar pest control and lawn care company. We need Branch Managers and Manager trainees to staff our new locations in Florida and the Southeast. Send resume in confidence to Ron Collins, R. W. Collins, Inc., P.O. Box 2477, Satellite Beach, Fla. 32937. 8/83

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# DATES

**PLCAA Regional Seminar**, Cleveland, OH, July 12. Contact: Mark Laube, Lawnmark Assoc., 4445 Akron-Cleveland Rd., Peninsula, OH, 44264. (216) 928-4431.

**PLCAA Regional Seminar**, White Plains, NY, July 14. Contact: Bill Carey, Lawn Masters, 19 Broadway, Hawthorne, NY, 10532. (914) 769-1256.

**PLCAA Regional Seminar**, Chicago, July 10. Contact: Charlie McGinty, McGinty Brothers, Rt. 2, Box 518, Long Grove Road, Long Grove, IL, 60047. (312) 438-5161.

**PLCAA Regional Seminar**, Buffalo, NY, July 21. Contact: Des Rice, Weed Man, Ltd., Box 366, Port Credit, Mississauga, ON, Canada, L5G 4M1. (416) 279-5448.

**Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show**, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, PA, July 26-28. Contact: Pat Norman, 234 State St., Harrisburg, PA, 17101-1181. (717) 238-1673.

**PLCAA Regional Seminar**, Framingham, MA, July 28. Contact: Drew Kenney, Turf Doctor, 82 Herbert St., Framingham, MA, 01701. (617) 879-4510.

**Illinois Landscape Contractors Association Summer Field Day**, Matt Tures Sons Nursery, Huntley, IL, Aug. 3. Contact: Lucile Little, 4A East Wilson St., Batavia, IL, 60510. (312) 879-5566.

**PLCAA Regional Seminar**, Detroit, MI, Aug. 4. Contact: Donald Benham, Benham Chemical. (313) 624-3200.

**PLCAA Regional Seminar**, Omaha, NE, Aug. 10. Contact: Allen Duey, Jay-Lan Inc., 310 S. Floyd, Sioux City, IA, 51101. (712) 252-5252.

**American Association of Nurserymen Management Seminar**, Marcum Memorial Conference Center, Miami University, Oxford, OH, Aug. 14-18. Contact: Rae Landesberg, AAN, 230 Southern Building, Washington, DC, 20005. (202) 737-4060.

**East Lansing Turfgrass Field Day**, Hancock Turfgrass Research Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, Sept. 1. Contact: Dr. Paul E. Rieke, Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, MSU, East Lansing, MI, 48824. (517) 355-0266.

**Virginia Tech Turfgrass Research Field Days**, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, Sept. 27-29. Contact Dr. John R. Hall III, Agronomy Dept., VPI & SU, Blacksburg, VA, 24061-7294. (703) 961-5797.

**Professional Grounds Management Society Conference and Trade Show**, Marriott Hotel, Cincinnati, OH, Oct. 15-19. Contact: PGMS, 7 Church Lane, Pikesville, MD, 21208. (301) 653-2742.

**Western Irrigation Show**, International Agri-Center, Tulare, CA, Oct. 18-20. Contact: International Agri-Center, P.O. Box 1475, Tulare, CA, 93275. (209) 688-1751.

**New York State Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show**, Rochester, NY, Nov. 1-3. Contact: Ann Reilly, 210 Cartwright Blvd., Massapequa Park, NY, 11762. (516) 541-6902.

**North Central Turfgrass Exposition**, Arlington Park Hilton Hotel, Arlington Heights, IL, Nov. 1-3. Contact: Dr. Thomas W. Ferminian, University of Illinois, 106D Horticulture Field Lab, 1707 S. Orchard St., Urbana, IL, 61801. (217) 333-7847.

**Professional Lawn Care Association of America Convention and Trade Show**, Indianapolis Convention Center, Indianapolis, IN, Nov. 8-10. Contact: Jim Brooks, Executive Director, PLCAA, 1225 Johnson Ferry Rd., Suite B-220, P.O. Box 70455, Marietta, GA, 30007-0455. (404) 977-5222.

**Associated Landscape Contractors of America Maintenance Conference**, Denver, CO, Nov. 13-15. Contact: ALCA, 1750 Old Meadow Rd., McLean, VA, 22101. (703) 821-8611.

**Arbor Expo**, Philadelphia Civic Center, Nov. 17-19. Contact: Daryl Komar, Conference Management Corp., 17 Washington St., Norwalk, Ct, 06854. (203) 852-0500.

**Agri-Turf Irrigation Exposition and Conference**, Currihan Hall, Denver, CO, Dec. 4-7. Contact: Karen L. Noyes, The Irrigation Association, 13975 Connecticut Ave., Silver Spring, MD, 20906. (301) 871-1200.

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# Proper maintenance could mean \$ savings

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engine to overspeed, compounding the problem.

Any discussion of engine maintenance would be incomplete without a discussion of fuels. Most air-cooled engine manufacturers recommend the use of unleaded gasoline in their engines, because unleaded gasolines tend to produce lighter and softer combustion deposits. However, leaded gasoline may be used.

Regardless of the type of gasoline used, it is important that it be clean and fresh and blended for the season in which it is to be used. As gasoline stands, it tends to deteriorate and form deposits which will plug carburetor passageways and cause valves to stick. If it is necessary to store gasoline for long periods of time, a gasoline stabilizer should be added to the fuel.

Many users of lawn and garden

equipment have found that maintenance schedules serve as a useful reminder of necessary engine maintenance. A check sheet for each piece of equipment giving maintenance functions to be performed after various hours of operation is ideal. If keeping track of the hours of operation is impractical, set up a maintenance schedule on a calendar basis. However, make sure that the service intervals are realistic.

## Plan schedule

For instance, oil is to be changed after every 25 hours of operation. Don't set up a bi-weekly oil change schedule if it is possible that the engine will be operated 30 to 40 hours per week.

A more frequent service interval will be necessary.

Engine manufacturers are continually redesigning their products to make them more maintenance free. Examples of this are the new Magnetron ignition system used on many Tecumseh engines. These systems virtually eliminate the need for ignition system maintenance. However, regardless of the innovations provided by engine manufacturers, there will continue to be a basic need for keeping engines and the air they consume clean, keeping engines air cooled and lubricated, and maintaining proper adjustments. This basic maintenance will pay off in longer engine life and dollars saved.

## Cancellations

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For example: if a customer indicated that he cancelled to trim expenses, you are not likely to try to convince him that he has more money than he believes. He, on the other hand, may have a cheaper price from a competitor and may want to try a different service anyway. He doesn't want your service, so he gives you a reason he knows you won't talk him out of. Hard to believe? Watch the surveys and you'll be amazed.

"Okay — so what if a few customers cancel?" If this attitude is typical of your company's thinking, stop it! None of us is in a bottomless barrel of economic potential. Each year, thousands enter the market competing for a smaller and smaller slice of the pie. Cancellations are costing you in ways you may not have considered.

## More than money

Sure, that's \$175 annually that your company lost — but what about the lost source of goodwill? How long did you need that customer on the books before you recovered advertising and sales costs? What about overhead costs? How many applications do you really need before you begin to show a profit? What about customer-produced leads or referrals? Aren't your older customers a more reliable source of advertising than your newer ones? What is the average age of service of your customer? Has this age increased or decreased in the last two years?

Finally, don't be afraid to spend some money on supplemental services. Consider the questions we asked earlier, and you'll find that money invested in surveys, labor, dethatching machines, equipment, seed and fertilization may save you untold thousands in the future.

Monitoring these facts and determining trends early is important. Adding extra services at no charge may be necessary if you intend to stay in the lawn care business. Why? Because if you aren't trying to identify your strengths and weaknesses in your relationships with your customers, your competitor is!

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